

4. COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES

4.1 GENERAL

The York County Communications System will be used only for the transaction of official business by authorized persons in accordance with the procedures described in this manual. Nothing in these procedures will prohibit the use of wired or wireless telephone facilities where their use may be more practical and effective. All operators will comply with the regulations of the Federal Communications Commission.

4.1A The dispatcher must maintain complete control over dispatching units and allow only those units to respond which have been assigned to a particular call. The dispatcher must do all they can to ensure the safety of the field responder. All dispatchers will receive and maintain certification in APCO P33 or equivalent course.

4.1B The dispatcher is responsible for clearing traffic as quickly as possible for maintaining discipline on the air, and for determining the order of priority on simultaneous transmissions. To insure a smooth and efficient operation, all orders of the dispatcher must be strictly obeyed. The priority of transmissions includes but is not limited to the following:

- A. Any transmission pertaining to a fire, crime in progress or medical emergency of a life-threatening status.
- B. The movement or disposition of units during or because of an emergency.
- C. Fire ground, police incident or medical scene operations.
- D. The location of personnel on official business.
- E. Messages needed for the normal operation of a department (investigations, inspections, training, etc).
- F. Test messages required by regulation or repair service.
- G. Routine broadcast of station identification and time.
- H. Routine tests with mobile units.

I. Redirect the movements, as required, of chief officers, department units, and special units when out of station but available for duty.

J. Special announcements as directed.

K. Parades and other non-emergency reports will be made by telephone.

- 4.1C Signal 13 (Police) and Mayday (Fire/EMS) will take priority over all other radio traffic. All units will immediately cease radio traffic until the emergency is cleared. The dispatcher will then immediately clear the air on the talk group where the MAYDAY was called and concentrate all focus on this talk group. Move all other operations to another talk group. The only individuals that should be on this talk group are the person declaring the emergency, and the outside contact that is communicating with him or her. Do not abandon this talk group for any reason until the situation has been resolved. Also see the section on Emergency Button Activation in this manual.
- 4.1D All communications will be clear and concise. The use of slang is prohibited. Federal law prohibits the use of profane and indecent language. Pronounce words carefully, giving proper form to each sound in every word. Keep a natural conversational rhythm. Speak calmly, clearly and distinctly. Do not shout into the radio. The use of "Thanks", "Please" and other expressions of courtesy are unnecessary and will not be used. Pleasantries or personal greetings will not be exchanged.
- 4.1E Police dispatchers are not required to sign on the radio as the new system has an automatic identifier that is always on. The West Fire/EMS dispatcher will be responsible for signing all fire/EMS dispatchers on at the beginning of the shift. This will be done on Mutual Aid, 33.88 and Med 10.
- 4.1F All units due on an assignment should advise the dispatcher of their response. It is suggested that if all units due from a department respond together, the OIC or one unit advise the Communications Center that their station is responding. At that time the Communications Center would assume all apparatus due from a station is responding.

- 4.1G The following units may advise “Responding” on incidents:
- A. Fire Department Duty Officers - The Communications Center will only acknowledge the first Line Officer (from the Department of the first due box area) that signs on the radio. No other Officer shall call responding.
 - B. Fire Police Captain or Duty Officer – The Communications Center will only acknowledge the first Line Officer (from the Department of the first due box area) that signs on the radio. No other Officer shall call responding.
- 4.1H Reporting on-the-scene/ Fire Ground Report
- A. The first arriving unit or officer will provide the Communications Center with a visual report of the incident. All pertinent information received concerning a specific instruction for a particular unit such as water supply assignment or exposure protection; May Day or Emergency Evacuation will be rebroadcasted by the Communications Center. On-the-scene incident reports will be documented in the narrative of the call and not rebroadcast unless different then dispatch information.
 - A. All first alarm apparatus or companies may advise Communications of their arrival to the scene. Second alarm or other mutual aid apparatus will not advise the status of “On the Scene.”
 - C. All pertinent information received concerning fire ground conditions will be broadcast by Communications, preceded by an alert tone.
- 4.1I Fire Chiefs should advise “On the Scene” only if they are the first arriving unit at the incident, or if they are assuming incident command.
- 4.1J Line ups should be faxed into the Communications Center prior to the beginning of each shift. The line up should include (as appropriate) the badge number or station number, car assignment, radio number and sector.

- 4.1K Companies placing apparatus out-of-service (maintenance, etc) will relay such information to the Communications Center by telephone. Apparatus being placed out of service or unavailable during an incident due to manning, availability, or mechanical problems may be done by radio.

4.2 DISPATCH

- 4.2A Fire and EMS calls will be dispatched via alpha numeric pager. This page will include the location with cross streets, the call for service and nature of the call, box number, equipment due, talkgroup assigned, and the time and date of dispatch. A single voice dispatch will be made on the Dispatch talkgroup.

- 4.2B Fire and EMS units will respond on the home talk group of the incident and then switch to the operations talk group if required. The operations talkgroup will be indicated in the dispatch. For example, "4/10" would indicate respond on OPS 4, operations on OPS 10. See Section 10 for Fire/EMS talkgroup assignments.

- 4.2C A response check will be made for fire units at the five minute mark, and at the seven minute mark for EMS units. If there is no response from a unit, the next due unit will automatically be dispatched.

- 4.2D The fire/EMS dispatcher will monitor the assigned talkgroup. If additional talk groups are needed, the Incident Commander will advise communications and they will be assigned if available. The order will be:

OPS2 will use OPS6, OPS7
OPS3 will use OPS8, OPS9
OPS4 will use OPS10, OPS11
OPS5 will use OPS12, OPS13

OPS 14, 15, 16 will be assigned as needed.

These will not be monitored unless requested by the Incident Commander and staffing allows. If the dispatcher is unable to monitor a talk group, they will notify the 911 shift supervisor who will decide how to handle the situation.

- 4.2E Upon arrival at the scene the first unit or officer will contact the Communications Center and advise of their arrival. At the time of arrival the IC will name the command relative to

the incident such as (1st St. Command / Main St. Command). After the IC has named the command location, all units and Communications Center personnel involved in that incident will use the same descriptor. It will be the responsibility of the Command to name the command site.

- 4.2F The Communications Center will log only the following fire call information via CAD unless there is a special need or request by the IC, or as time allows:

Dispatch Time
Responding Time
Incident Command Arrival Time
Incident Name
Under Control or Extrication Complete Time
Unit or Company Available Time

- 4.2G The Communications Center will log only the following EMS call information via CAD unless there is a special need or request, or as time allows:

Dispatch Time
Responding Time
EMS Unit Arrival Time
En Route to Hospital Time
Arrival at Hospital Time
Unit Available Time

- 4.2H Patient information will be provided to responders using the National Academies of Emergency Dispatch (NAED) Four Commandments: Chief Complaint, Age, Status of Consciousness, and Status of Breathing. Additional clarifying information may be added at the discretion of the dispatcher.

- 4.2I The following updates will be sent via digital pager and announced on the radio:

Cancel the call
Dangerous scene- stage away
Holding the Box to the (equipment)
MAYDAY
Confirmed Entrapment
Working Fire

Other announcements and pages will include:

Talk group changes (include Fire Police)
York is now operating under Phase 1 of Emergency
Operations
York is now operating under Phase 2 of Emergency
Operations

These and other appropriate updates will be announced on the radio, preceded by an alert tone.

- 4.2J No responder will switch to, change or utilize any other talkgroup without requesting and being granted permission from the Communications Center to do so. The only exception will be in utilizing the Talk Around (T/A) channels. They are York County licensed frequencies and are P25 compliant. UTAC is for NIMS operation. The T/A FE channels may be utilized with the permission of the Incident Commander, Chief or Officer in charge of the incident or training. It is highly recommended that the Communications Center be advised of the use of these frequencies. It should also be noted that when utilizing these frequencies the emergency button on any radio does not alert the communications center although any radio on the same T/A channel and within range will receive the Emergency. The dispatcher cannot monitor these frequencies.
- 4.2K When a call is cancelled the Communications Center will announce the cancellation on the home talk group of the incident or the fire ground talkgroup. The Communications Center will monitor the assigned fire ground talk groups for acknowledgements. The cancellation will also be sent out over the paging system for the benefit of any unit due on the call but not responding. This page will include the box number for the cancelled call.
- 4.2L When 2nd due units are dispatched and/or responding to a call and 1st due units sign on for the same call, the decision will be made by 1st due units as to who will be handling the incident.
- 4.2M Duty officer paging for non-emergency items such as road closings will not be conducted between the hours of 2200 and 0800.

4.2N Safety checks will be conducted for Fire and EMS units every 20 minutes once a unit arrives on the scene. This will be done for medical calls and other dispatched calls where there are no other public safety personnel present. If no response is received after the check, a police response will be initiated.

4.2O Only one fire police unit will call responding and make status changes on behalf of the station. This will be done on the home talkgroup for the incident. Additional responses will be made on the appropriate Fire Police talkgroup and be coordinated internally. All Fire Police operations will occur on the Fire Police talk groups. See Section 10 for talkgroup assignments.

4.2P The correct format of a fire, fire police or EMS voice dispatch would be:

Dispatch: “(municipality), (address or location), (cross streets), (incident type), (box area and units due), (talk group), (time).”

The correct format of a police voice dispatch would be:

Dispatch: “York to (unit)”

Unit: “(unit) go ahead”

Dispatch: “(incident type), (municipality if required), (pertinent details)”

Unit: “(unit) ok”

Dispatch: “(unit) (time)”

4.2Q York County 911 uses alphanumeric paging to alert Fire and EMS units.

4.2R York County DES utilizes the NATO Phonetic Alphabet:

Alpha	Juliet	Sierra
Bravo	Kilo	Tango
Charlie	Lima	Uniform
Delta	Mike	Victor
Echo	November	Whiskey
Foxtrot	Oscar	X-Ray
Golf	Papa	Yankee
Hotel	Quebec	Zulu
India	Romeo	

4.2S York County DES utilizes the 24-hour time system.

4.2T York County DES utilizes clear speech and plain English. No 10-codes will be used by the dispatcher.

4.3 LOST OR STOLEN RADIOS

If a radio is lost or stolen contact the dispatch supervisor immediately. The radio system manager will disable and remove that radio from the system database.

If a lost or stolen radio is recovered, the Chief Officer will contact the 911 Telecommunications Administrator.